

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-65. (Cancelled)

66. (Previously Presented) A method of monitoring access requests to access providers comprising:

observing, using an intermediary device other than an access providing host that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's submission of an access request to a first access providing host;

accessing, using the intermediary device, stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;

comparing, using the intermediary device, the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors; and

when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 66 wherein denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an

acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 66 wherein the intermediary device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 66 further comprising:
denying the access request in response to a determination that a return address included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

70. (Previously Presented) A networking device, other than an access providing host that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

observing information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's submission of an access request to a first access providing host;

accessing stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;

comparing the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors; and

when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, denying the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host.

71. (Previously Presented) A storage medium encoded with instructions that, when executed by a processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising:

observing, using an intermediary device other than an access providing host that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's submission of an access request to a first access providing host;

accessing, using the intermediary device, stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;

comparing, using the intermediary device, the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors; and

when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host.

72-79. (Cancelled)

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 66 further comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 further comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.

82. (Previously Presented) The networking device of claim 70 wherein denying the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

83. (Previously Presented) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the networking device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

84. (Previously Presented) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

denying the access request in response to a determination that a return address included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

85. (Previously Presented) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

86. (Previously Presented) The networking device of claim 85 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor,

operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.

87. (Previously Presented) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

88. (Previously Presented) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the intermediary device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

89. (Previously Presented) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising:

denying the access request in response to a determination that a return address included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

90. (Previously Presented) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the

access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

91. (Previously Presented) The storage medium of claim 90 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.

92. (New) A method of handling connection transactions, the method comprising:
receiving, at an intermediary device, a connection transaction request from a requestor device that requests access to an access providing host;
using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection transaction request to the access providing host; and
blocking, at the intermediary device, the connection transaction request in response to a determination to block the connection transaction request.

93. (New) The method of claim 92 wherein using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection transaction request to the access providing host comprises monitoring connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts.

94. (New) The method of claim 93 wherein monitoring connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts comprises measuring timing of connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts.

95. (New) The method of claim 92 wherein using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection transaction request to the access providing host comprises comparing, at the intermediary device, an identity of the requestor device to information identifying requestor devices, of the access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the partially-completed connection transaction request.

96. (New) The method of claim 92 wherein the intermediary device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the access providing host.

97. (New) The method of claim 92 further comprising, in response to a determination not to block the connection transaction request, determining, at the intermediary device, whether the connection transaction request results in a partially-completed connection transaction in which a time out condition is reached prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request.

98. (New) The method of claim 97 further comprising, in response to a determination that the connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request, terminating the connection transaction request.

99. (New) The method of claim 97 further comprising, in response to a determination that the connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request, adding the requestor device to the information identifying requestor devices that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to enable blocking of future connection transaction requests received from the requestor device.

100. (New) The method of claim 92 wherein, at the time of blocking the connection transaction request, the intermediary device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that requested access to the access providing host.

101. (New) The method of claim 92 further comprising delaying termination of a partially-completed connection transaction based on the connection transaction request to allow the intermediary device to continue monitoring communications from the requestor device to the access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

102. (New) The method of claim 92 further comprising:
blocking, at the intermediary device, the connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return address included in the connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device.

103. (New) A networking device comprising:
a processor; and
a memory encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:
receiving a connection transaction request from a requestor device that requests access to an access providing host;
using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection transaction request to the access providing host; and
blocking the connection transaction request in response to a determination to block the connection transaction request.

104. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection

transaction request to the access providing host comprises monitoring connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts.

105. (New) The networking device of claim 104 wherein monitoring connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts comprises measuring timing of connection transaction requests across multiple access providing hosts.

106. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein using information identifying requestor devices, of other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to determine whether to block the connection transaction request to the access providing host comprises comparing an identity of the requestor device to information identifying requestor devices, of the access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts, that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the partially-completed connection transaction request.

107. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein the networking device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the access providing host.

108. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

in response to a determination not to block the connection transaction request, determining whether the connection transaction request results in a partially-completed connection transaction in which a time out condition is reached prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request.

109. (New) The networking device of claim 108 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

in response to a determination that the connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request, terminating the connection transaction request.

110. (New) The networking device of claim 108 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

in response to a determination that the connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request, adding the requestor device to the information identifying requestor devices that previously submitted a partially-completed connection transaction request to enable blocking of future connection transaction requests received from the requestor device.

111. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein, at the time of blocking the connection transaction request, the networking device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that requested access to the access providing host.

112. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

delaying termination of a partially-completed connection transaction based on the connection transaction request to allow the networking device to continue monitoring communications from the requestor device to the access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

113. (New) The networking device of claim 103 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

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blocking the connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return address included in the connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device.